

<http://www.christian-parent.com/teens/teen-college.shtml>

Should Your Teen Help Pay for College?

by Rachel Paxton

Description: Thoughts on whether or not your teen should help pay for his or her college education.

It's that time of year again, time to fill out financial aid forms for college.

Our family is a proud member of the American middle class, the portion of the population that is not eligible for any type of government grants for college. Several years ago we found ourselves footing the entire bill for our daughter's college education.

So should your teen have to help pay for their college education? I have heard many points of view on this subject.

If your family cannot afford to pay for your teen's college tuition, then of course your teen will have to at least help pay in order to attend college. This is especially true in families where there are several children who will be attending college.

I also know of families that could afford to pay for their teen's entire college education, but they instead expect their teen to pay the bill if they want to attend college.

Our family fell into a category where we probably could have paid for all of it if we really cut back on all of our other expenses, but my husband and I decided that our daughter should help pay for part of her tuition.

If your teen knows he or she will have to help pay for their tuition, it will influence which college they attend. They will definitely take the cost of tuition into consideration. When looking for colleges, don't let them rule out private colleges. Although public colleges are usually less expensive, our daughter chose to attend a small private college that costs about the same amount as a large public college.

It was fairly easy for us to determine how much to have our daughter help pay for her tuition. When we filled out her financial aid forms her first year of college, she qualified for a small government student loan and some college work study. The work study allowed her to work on campus about 10 hours a week and the money she earned she paid toward her tuition. This is great because this money goes straight to her expenses. Her student loan is approximately \$2300 per year, so after she graduates she will have a total of about \$7000 in student loans to repay. Her second year of college she didn't qualify for work study but she was able to keep her job anyway...many colleges have jobs on campus that aren't only reserved for the work study program. At first I was afraid the

work study would be too much in addition to school work, but we have found that 2 hours a day has not gotten in the way of her schoolwork in any way.

Between student loans and work study our daughter is paying for approximately 30% of her total education expenses. My husband and I took out a loan to pay the rest.

We are very happy with the arrangement we've made with our daughter. We didn't in any way want to burden her with huge student loans after she graduates from college, especially if we had the means to help her pay for it. On the other hand, we also wanted her to appreciate it more by feeling she had helped pay for it.

There are many ways to reduce the price of college tuition, so make sure to do your homework and don't wait until your teen is ready to graduate from high school to start looking into your options. Our daughter, only a slightly above average student, attended community college for a year and a half during high school, earning both high school and college credits. These credits made it possible for her to attend only three more years of college to get her four-year degree, saving us an entire year of college tuition. The total of our portion of our daughter's college education amounts to what many colleges cost for only one year of college. Not too bad!

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